AN EXACT MODEL OR PLATFORM OF GOOD Magistracy: OR A SERMON

Preached before the Governour, Council, and Assembly, at their first Meeting at Saint *Jago de la Vega*, in *Jamaica*, *Feb.* 1. 1671.

By *Henry Houser*, Minister of Gods Word in St. *Katharines* Parish.

Psal. 82. 6, 7. *I have said, ye are Gods, and all of you are Children of the most High; but ye shall die like men.*

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To the Right Honourable Sir *Thomas Lynch*, Governour and Commander in Chief of his Majesties Island of *Jamaica*, &c. As likewise, to his Honourable Councel, and Gentlemen of the Assembly, continuance of all Grace, and Peace, through Jesus Christ.

I *was far from my Thoughts, as being conscious of my own private Weakness, that this poor Sermon should gain such Acceptance with you, as to judge it worthy either of your Thanks, or of publick View: But seeing your Pleasure is to Order the Publishing of it, I do humbly Obey. And therefore*

fore take the boldneſs to Offer and Conſecrate the ſame even to you, who are the Head and the Repreſentatives of this whole Land, and have commanded both the Preaching and Printing of it: Yea, and it is my Duty which Obliges me to make you this thankful Acknowledgments for the many ſingular Favours and Courteſies, particularly that of your laſt Liberal Bounty and Kindneſs beſtowed and faſtned upon me; ſo that I muſt ſay as Ruth *ſaid once to* Boaz, *Chap.* 11, 10. Why have I found grace in your Eyes, that you ſhould take knowledg of me, ſeeing I am a Stranger. *Verily I can aſcribe and impute it to no other cauſe, but unto Gods infinite Mercy, and your own Goodneſs. The great God of Heaven, who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, ſo direct your Hearts, that all and every one of you may truly, and indeed (according to* Jethro's *Counſel) approve your ſelves to be Men of Ability, fearing God, men of Truth, hating Covetouſneſs: That you may truly and indeed (according to the Power God hath intruſted you withal) oppoſe the violent ſtream of all Lewdneſs, and Wickedneſs, and Prophanneſs, and be a lively Example to the Practiſe of Piety, of Holineſs and Godlineſs: Yea, that you may have both the Caurage and Zeal of* Moſes, *to Defend and Protect the true Religion and Worſhip of God, againſt all Oppoſers thereof. And this the Lord expects at your Hands, in regard of the depth of your Intereſts:*

eſts: You are more concerned in the Publick welfare of this Iſland, than others of a more private Station, and therefore you are bound to ſeek and to promote the Good and Welfare of this Iſland, more than others. It is a Maxime in Divinity, Beneficium poſtulat officium; *Thoſe whom God calls to the Higheſt places, he calls withal to the Higheſt ſervices: Therefore it behoveth you above all things to remove all Impediments which might hinder the Advancement of the Glory of God, the Flouriſhing of the Goſpel, and the Happineſs and Proſperity of this Iſland. If this be your chief Study and Care, then certainly the God of Heaven will be with you, and bleſs you in all your Doings, in all your Conſultations: Then indeed, this great Keeper of* Iſrael *will keep and preſerve you in all your Wayes, both in your going forth, and in your coming in, from this time forth and for evermore.*

And this is the daily Prayer of

your humbly Devoted

Servant,

H. H.

EXOD. 18. 21.

Moreover thou ſhalt p ovide out of all the people able men, ſuch as fear God, men of truth, hating covetouſneſs.

GReat Conjunctions of Heavenly Bodies are uſually attended with great and notable Changes. Beloved! I hope that your preſent Conjunction will operate and conduce much to the happineſs and welfare of this Iſland. To the obtaining whereof it is moſt neceſſary that you eſpecially (who are the Repreſentatives of this whole Land) would ſtudy to approve *Exordium.*

your ſelves (according to the direction of *Jethro* unto *Moſes*) to be Men of Ability. fearing God, Men of Truth, hating Covetouſneſs. This *Jethro* was Father in Law to *Moſes*, who ſeeing and obſerving the great Care, and Trouble, and Pains, that *Moſes* took in Judging the People, wiſely foreſaw that at length it would prove a thing too heavy for him alone to perform: and except he did ſpeedily remedy it, it would not be long ere it would utterly conſume his ſpirits, and wear away his ſtrength, and health, and life, in taking upon himſelf alone all the care and trouble of giving Judgment among the people from morning untill evening. Therefore to prevent all inconveniency, *Jethro* by his ſage and wiſe advice, counſelleth *Moſes* to take unto him ſuch fit and meet Aſſiſtants, who by their juſt government of the people might eaſe him of that heavy burthen, and help him to bear the ſame with more comfort and eaſe. And this counſel of *Jethro* is expreſſed in the words of the Text, ſaying, *Moreover thou ſhalt provide out of all the people able men, ſuch as fear God, men of truth, hating covetouſneſs.* Here is the firſt draught of Magiſtracy, which *Moſes* himſelf (the greateſt Law-giver that ever was) followed and practiſed with good ſucceſs; and therefore I have

have chosen it at this time for my Text, to shew and declare unto you especially, who are upon this day come and Assembled together for the Good and Welfare of this Island, how to perform your Duty, and to Discharge your Trust with a good Conscience, that you would be pleased to set before your Eyes, this most perfect Model and Platform of the best Magistracy in the Text, and according thereunto Exact and Direct all your Consultations to the Glory of the great Judge of Heaven and Earth, the Advancement of the Church, and the Happiness and Prosperity of this Island. And all this grant He who is the great Monarch in Heaven and Earth for Jesus Christ his sake.

The Parts of the Text are two:

I. The Counsel of *Jethro*, which he gives to *Moses*; in these words, *Thou shalt provide.* Διχοτομία.

II. This Counsel is Described and Particularised by four Essential Characters, or Properties of good Magistrates: They ought to be, 1. *Able Men.* 2. *Such as fear God.* 3. *Men of Truth.* 4. *Hating Covetousness.* *Membrum* I.

I begin with the First, *viz.* The Counsel of *Jethro* which he gives to *Moses*; in these words of the Text, *Moreover thou shalt provide.* The word in the Original תחזה imports great *Care*, and *Curiosity*, and *Circumspection*, that is to be made in the choice or election of Superiours and Magistrates. In the New Testament we have the word ἐπισκέψασθε, *Look ye out*, Acts 6. 3, It is added in the Text מכל־העם *Out of the People*; the Magistrate must be chosen out of all the People, he must be a choice Man, one of a thousand, culled and selected out of all the People: *Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the People.* This is the first part of the Text.

Membrum II.

Requisita ad pium Magistratum pertinentia.

In the second, it followeth to be considered how this Counsel is described, and particularized by four essential Characters, or Properties of good Magistrates: They must be. 1. *Able Men.* 2. *Such as fear God.* 3. *Men of Truth.* 4. *Hating Covetousness.*

I. *Virtus & Potentia.*

I. The prime and first Character then required in good Superiours and Magistrates is *Ability*; they must be אנשי חיל *Vire potentes.* Able men. This Ability includeth strength of body, whereby they are enabled

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to undergo and execute their Places and Offices with the more diligence and induſtry. It includeth greatneſs of Eſtate and Deſcent, of Riches and Wealth, of Birth and Blood, which oftentimes puts Spirit and Courage into the Souls of Superiours and Magiſtrates. Theſe are but accidental and complemental Ingredients belonging to Superiours and Magiſtrates: The main and eſſential parts, that are comprehended under the word *Ability*, are following; *a.* Underſtanding and Wiſdom: Therefore *Solomon* prayed to God for an *underſtanding heart*, 1 *Reg.* 3. 4. *Give thy Servant an underſtanding heart to judge thy People, that I may diſcern between good and bad.* *b.* Another ſubſtantial thing comprized under the word *Ability*, is moderation of Mind, which enables him to Rule and Govern his Paſſion and Affection: A thing very neceſſary in a Magiſtrate, who muſt not ſuffer his Judgment to be over-ruled and overſwayed by his Paſſion.

Fortior qui ſeſe, quam qui fortiſſima vincit
Mœnia ——— ———

Such an one is ſtronger then he that ſubdues and conquers the ſtrong Cittadel. *c.* The laſt and principal Virtue comprehended under

der the word *Ability*, is Courage and Fortitude; as the Lord charged *Jeshua*, Chap. 1. 9. *Be strong and of good courage, be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.* Oh what Courage and Heroical Spirit and Resolution ought he to be endued withal, that must Encounter and Oppose the violent Torrent of Wickedness and Vice? You are Met and Assembled together, to begin and to perform a great work among us; to Advance the Glory of God, to Countenance the Gospel, and the true Professors thereof, and to reform all that is amiss; and therefore you have need of Courage. You must confute the Sins of the mighty; you must support the work of the Ministrie against all Opposers of Gods true Religion and Worship, especially against those proud *Phanatick* Emissaries, who under pretence of New Discoveries, and New Revelations of the Spirit wander from place to place, from one Quarter of this Island to another, and in opposition to the true Light of the Gospel cry out New Light, New Light; whereby they Seduce, Deceive, and Delude the Hearts of the Poor, Simple, and Ignorant People; and therefore you have need of Courage. You must be νόμος ἔμψυχος, a living Law, and be an Example

ample to all Good; and therefore you have need of Courage. You muſt help the Poor to their right, you muſt defend the Widdow and the Fatherleſs, againſt them that are too mighty for them; and therefore you have need of courage. Therefore awake and put on courage, you that ſit at the Helm and Govern the Ship of our *Commonwealth*, ſteer a ſtraight and right courſe without ſwarving to the Right or Left Hand for fear or favour. Neglect and diſpiſe the Diſpleaſure and Frowns of Great men, and Reſcue the Poor out of the Hands of the Oppreſſour. Therefore be ſtrong in the Lord, faint not, be not weary of well doing, but be couragious, though in Rowing and Guiding the Ship of our *Commonwealth*, the Winds blow, and the Seas rage, Chriſt Jeſus by his Divine Providence and Protection, will ſupport and uphold it, that it ſhall not Sink, he will ſend a calm and bring it ſafely aſhore. Wherefore let me proclaim and ſpeak as *Gideon* in the Ears of all the Faint-hearted, *Judg.* 7. 3. *Whoſoever is fearful and afraid, let him return Home and depart.* On the other ſide I ſay unto you that are of Ability, of Wiſdom and Courage, as the Angel did to *Gideon*, Judg. 6. 12, 14. *The Lord is with thee, thou mighty Man of Valour; go on in this thy might to ſave* Iſrael:

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Prooceed and go on from strength to strength. And so much of the first Character of good Superiours and Magistrates, they ought to be men of Ability.

1. Timor Domini.

II. The next Character of them, from whence all the rest proceed, is the Fear of God; they must be יראי אלהים *Timentes Deum*, Fearing God: They must be such as fear God, not slavishly with a servile fear, but truly, sincerely, with a filial fear wrought in them by Faith, and the assurance of Gods Love and Favour. He that hath this Virtue wants none, and without this true fear of Justice, a Receiver of False-Witnesses, a Patron of Violence and Oppression? The principal scope and intent why God hath appointed and ordained Superiours and Magistrates to Rule and Govern the World, is that they may advance his Glory, countenance the true Riligion and Worship of God, and protect the *Church* and *Commonwealth*: Now for these things what cares a prophane and uncircumcised Vice-god, who fears not God, who bears the Sword in vain, and minds nothing else here on Earth but his own Profit and Pleasure? As for the *Church* or *Commonwealth*, Sink they, Swim they, all is one to him. So that it is certain, that the fear of God is the

the chiefest thing required in a good Magistrate, who is the Minister of God, and his Sword bearer; nay, it is the whole Duty of man, as *Solomon* speaks, *Eccles.* 12. 13. *Fear God and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole duty of Man* Hence it was that the Lord commanded the King, *Deut.* 17. 18, 19. *To write a Copy of the Law in a Book, and to Read therein all the dayes of his Life; that he may Learn to Fear the Lord his God, and to keep his Commandments, and to do them.* A Magistrate, in whom God hath planted his holy Fear, he will Judge others as one that remembers he must be Judged himself; he will help the Orphans to their Right, and defend the cause of the Widdow: He is ἀπροσωπολήπτης, no Respecter of Persons; He will neither condemn the Innocent, nor justifie the Wicked: He will set a watch over his Eyes, that they behold no wrong, over his Ears that they hear no false Accusation, over his Tongue that it pronounce no unjust Sentence, over his Hands that they receive no Bribe. When an unlawful Suit is commenced by Favour or Friendship, by Power or Policy, he answers with *Job*, Chap. 31. 14. *What shall I do when God riseth up? And when he visiteth what shall I answer him?* This, this is the man that feareth the Lord. By this Character, now it will

appear what to think of those many prophane and wicked Vice-gods, who sell themselves to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord; who give themselves to all Good Fellowship in the world, to all excess of Riot, and hate to be Reformed:

——— *Stat pro ratione voluntas.*

Their Will is their Law, and their Conscience too. Such I mean as hold Religion a disparagement to Gallantry and Gentility, who fear nothing more then to have a Name that they fear God; who think when they have gotten an Office, they may Swear by Authority, Oppress by License, Drink and Swill without Controul. What shall I say of such? Are these *Gods, or Children of the most High?* Devils they are rather than Deputies for him; far better becoming a prophane and drunken Alehouse, than a grave and sober Assembly. Let me take up the words of the Prophet *Jeremiah*, and say to such prophane *Esaus*, Chap. 5. 22. *Fear ye not me? Saith the Lord: Will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the Sand for the bounds of the Sea, by a perpetual Decree that it cannot pass?* If the wrath of a King be as the roaring of a Lion, as *Solomon* affirms, *Prov.* 20. 2. O then how terrible is the wrath

wrath of God, who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords? He himself will be one day a swift witness against such, *Mal.* 3. 5. *I will be a swift Witness against the Sorcerers, and against the Adulterers, and against false Swearers, and against those that Oppress the Hireling in his Wages, the Widdow, and the Fatherless, and that turn away the Stranger from his Right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of Hosts.* Men commonly are afraid of Goals, and Dungeons, and Gibbets, and this makes them abstain from Murder, Felony, and the like: And why then will ye not rather fear him, who is able to cast both Soul and Body into the everlasting Dungeon of Hell-fire, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of Teeth? Him I say Fear. I conclude this Point in the words of the Psalmist, *Psal.* 2. 10, 11, 12. *Be Wise now, O ye Kings; be Instructed, ye Judges of the Earth: Serve the Lord with Fear, and rejoyce with Trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be Angry, and ye Perish from the Way, when his Wrath is kindled but a little.*

III. And so I come to the third Character of good Superiours and Magistrates, they must be אנשי אמת *Viri veritatis*, Men of Truth. This is required in every Magistrate, in all those that are imployed in the

III. *Amor Veritatis.*

the Commonwealth, they must be good men and true, they must be, φιλαληθεις *Lovers of the Truth:* They must search out the truth out of the Labyrinths of Errour and Falsehood, and not suffer Justice to be perverted, but bring Judgment to the Balance of Truth and Righteousness. They must be of his Temper who said, *Amicus Plato, Amicus Socrates, magis autem amica Veritas: Plato* is my Friend, *Socrates* is my Friend, but Truth is my greatest Friend. Oh that our Rulers and Magistrates might truly say with *Job*, Chap. 29. 14, 15. *I put on Righteousness, and it Clothed me: My Judgment was as a Robe and a Diadem. I was Eyes to the Blind, and Feet was I to the Lame: I was a Father to the Poor, and the Cause which I knew not, I searched out.* Alas, may not the Lord complain at this day, as he did in the days of *Jeremiah*, Chap. 5. 1. *Run ye to and fro through the Streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the Broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth Judgment, that seeketh the Truth, and I will pardon it.* And *Isaiah* 59. 14. *Judgment is turned away backward, and Justice standeth afar off; for Truth is fallen in the Street, and Equity cannot enter.* Therefore (O ye Rulers of the Earth) study to be men of Truth; suffer not your selves to be corrupted by flattering Tongues,

Tongues, but maintain the Truth againſt all oppoſitions of the world: Let this be your Reſolution with the Prophet *David Pſal.* 101. 7. *He that worketh Deceit ſhall not dwell within my Houſe; he that telleth Lies, ſhall not tarry in my ſight.* Though you muſt undergo Hatred and croſſes, and Scorn, and Reproach for a time, for the Truths ſake; yet he that is *Amen*, the true Witneſs, yea Truth it ſelf; will certainly reward you in the end, with Temporal and Spiritual Bleſſings: While on the other ſide, he will ſhut out with the Dogs all ſuch as love and make Lies, according to that fearful Threatning, *Apoc.* 22. 15. *Without the Heavenly* Jeruſalem *are Dogs and Sorcerers, and Whoremongers, and Murtherers, and Idolaters, and whoſoever makes a Lie.* I cloſe up this Point with the Exhortation of *Solomon*, Prov. 23. 23. *Buy the Truth, and ſell it not.*

IV. And this leads me to the Fourth and laſt Character required in Good Superiours and Magiſtrates, they muſt be שונאובצע *Abhorzentes avaritiam*, hating Covetouſneſs, they muſt be ſuch as hate Covetouſneſs, which is the root of all Evil, 1 *Tim.* 6. 10. Covetouſneſs is an inordinate love of money, and is compared to the Dropſie, *Quo plus ſunt potæ, plus ſitiuntur aquæ*; The more they

they have, the more they will have. Oh! that we might not complain at this day of many Superiours and Magistrates. *Jer.* 6. 13. *For the least of them, even unto the greatest of them, every one is given to Covetousness* Therefore, O ye Rulers of the world, flee these things and hate Covetousness with a perfect Heart: Follow the counsel of the Apostle, *Heb.* 13. 5. *Let your Conversation be without Covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.* Let the words of the Lord be written and engraven over your Doors, *Deut.* 16. 19. *Thou shalt not wrest Judgment, thou shalt not respect Persons, neither take a Gift, for a Gift doth blind the Eyes of the Wise, and pervert the words of the Righteous.* Let all sordid and filthy Lucre be abominable, all ill gotten Goods execrable: Remember that the curse of God goeth along with unlawful and unrighteous Gains, and is like moth and Rust, to corrupt and canker them: *Malè parta, malè dilabuntur,* Goods unjustly gotten thrive not, a man shall not long enjoy them: *Vix gaudet tertius hæres.* It is a venture, but some Unthrifty Heir will waste and melt it away as fast, and as ill as ever his Father got it. See the words of the Apostle, *James* 5. 2, 3, 4. *Your Riches are corrupted, and your Garments are moth eaten, your Gold*

Gold and Silver is ca.kered, and the Rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were Fire: Ye have he.p'd Treasure together for the last day.: Behold the Hire of the Labourers, which have Reaped down your Fields, which is of you kept back by Fraud, crieth, and the Cries of them which have Reaped, are entred into the Ears of the Lord of Sabboth. These are the four cardinal virtues of good Superiours and Magistrates, they ought to be men of Ability, fearing God, men of Truth, hating Covetousness.

Hearken then, O ye Mountains and little Hills, you Gentlemen of this present Assembly, listen to this charge of *Jethro* in the Text, approving your Selves to be men of Ability, such as fear God, men of Truth, hating Covetousness. Put on courage to help the Poor and Needy, to defend the Widdow and the Fatherless, and to neglect the Frowns of great Ones: Fear God, set him always before your Eyes, and be a living Example to Holiness and Godliness: Study to be men of Truth, and set not a good countenance upon a bad cause: And lastly, hate Covetousness with a perfect Heart, and esteem Godliness the greatest gain. Plead for Christ, and he will plead for you, that so every one of you may appear at the Tribunal.

Application.

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of God with joy and comfort, and receive that sweet Sentence, *Mat.* 25. 2. *Well done thou good and faithful Servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee Ruler over many things: Enter thou into the joy of the Lord.* And verily it is now high time, you should earnestly Study, and Practise this excellent Lesson in the Text, *To be Men of Ability, such as fear God, Men of Truth, hating Covetousness*; especially in consideration of the abundance and continual increase of Sin in this Land. How doth every Street ring with Cursing, and Swearing, and Prophaneness? How little conscience do men make of this day, to live in open Filthiness, and Lasciviousness of the Flesh? The Minister may Teach and Preach what he will, and Threaten as long as he list, yet the Gallants of our time, like *Galio* in the *Acts of the Apostles*, they care for none of these things. We are fallen into those Times, where Prophanness and Licenciousness, have generally prevailed every where: Sin is grown to such an height, as if the *Word* of *God* were but a Scare crow, and all Religion but a Fable: we are brought to this woful pass, to mock and scoff at Holiness, and Godliness, at Piety and Religion, as if God were neither to be fear'd, nor cared for. Truly wickedness raigns in every state, in every condition, in

in every place: And now even at this time, as if we would defie God to his Face, and call upon him to haſten his Judgments upon our Land, upon our Families and Perſons, every one ſtrives (as it were) who ſhall outdare him moſt in our Atheiſm, Libertiniſm and Prophanneſs, in all Riot and Exceſs, in Impenitency. Oh that ſome *Jehoſaphat* would viſit and Reform! Oh that you eſpecially, who are the Head of the Principal members of this Iſland, would Redreſs ſome part of theſe Grievances, leſt Sin and Wickedneſs get the upper hand, and cauſe our Ruine! And this the Lord expects at your hands, in regard of thoſe many ſingular Favours, and Divine Bleſſings beſtowed upon us even in this Land: We have had Peace within our Walls, and Plenteouſneſs within our Dwellings, while Thouſands of our Brethren and Neighbours, were ſmitten with Gods manifold Judgments and Plagues: The Lord ſpared us, and kept us ſafe even to this day, Defeating and bringing to naught all miſchievous Plots and Policies of our Enemies againſt us. Oh then, give thanks unto the Lord, becauſe he is Good, and his Mercy endures for ever: Let the Houſe of *Levi* ſay, *his Mercy endures for ever*: Let the Houſe of *Judah* ſay, *his Mercy endures for ever*: Let our Fields and Plantations ſay, it is his mercy that

we be not all ſpoiled: Let our Towns and Dwelling-Houſes ſay, it is his Mercy that we be not all Burnt: Let our Churches ſay, it is his Mercy that we be not all raſed; yea, let this whole Iſland ſay, it is his Mercy that Fire, and Sword, and Peſtilence, and other Miſeries and Calamities did not Prey upon me, as upon others. O Lord, who is a God like unto thee, thus to Bear, thus to Spare, thus to Bleſs? Had not thy Mercies exceeded all Limits, our ſins ere this had ſunk us all, our Iſland had been made a ſecond *Sodom* and *Gomorrhe*! Oh that yet, yet we all of this Church, of this Land, would meet the Lord with Faſting, and Weeping, and mourning, and make our Peace and Reconciliation with him, while Peace is to be had! Oh that you eſpecially, who are now met and Aſſembled together for the Good and Welfare of this Iſland, would begin now, even now by wholeſome Laws and Ordinances, to beat down Sin and Wickedneſs, and Reform and Amend all that is amiſs! For this is the only way to keep our Iſland from mourning and miſery, and to prevent the Deſolation and final Deſtruction of it: And this will be Done and Accompliſhed, when you ſhall truly and really Study and Practiſe this profitable Leſſon in the Text, *To be Men of Ability, ſuch as fear God, Men of Truth, hating Cove-*

Covetouſneſs: Then indeed may you expect a Bleſſing upon all your Conſultations: Then as the Prophet *Amos* ſpeaks, chap. 5. 24. *Shall Judgment run down as Waters, and Righteouſneſs as a mighty Stream.* Then ſhall you, and we, and every one of us be able to go Home in Peace, ſit down under our Vines and Figtrees, follow our Callings, and that which is the chiefeſt of all, lead a Quiet and Peaceable life in all Honeſty and Godlineſs: Then ſhall the Earth increaſe, all People ſhall praiſe God, and God even our God, ſhall Bleſs us, and all the ends of the Earth ſhall fear him. Oh bleſſed be the Lord God of *Iſrael*, who only doth wondrous things; and bleſſed be his glorious Name for ever and ever, and let all the Earth be filled with his Glory. *Amen. Amen.*

Μόνῳ Θεῷ τῷ Θεῷ.

FINIS.

A

CATALOGUE

OF

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FINIS.